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WARTIME CLOTHING PROGRAM

Report of Committees appointed to Develop an Extension Wartime
Clothing Program for the Northeastern States

Northeastern States Conference

New York City

August 11-14, 1942

COMBINED REPORT OF

Committee I - "Adjusting Extension Clothing Program to Wartime
Needs"

Committee II- "Adjusting Clothing Teaching Methods and Materials
To Wartime Situations"

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Service

Washington, D. C.

WARTIME CLOTHING PROGRAM

Introduction:

Director M. L. Wilson's opening statement in Washington at the July 22, 1942 Planning Conference to Meet Wartime Clothing Needs keys the situation:

"In time of war, clothing materials become an essential war commodity. Everyone recognizes there will have to be many changes in our every day way of living. As with other commodities, the civilians need to see their clothing needs in relation to our general effort to release for war purposes, men, machines, factories, transportation, materials, and money, and at the same time maintain reasonable supplies of necessities at proper price levels."

Clothing Situation:

We recognize the clothing situation as outlined in the report of the Washington Planning Conference and repeated at our Northeastern States' Conference, August 11:

"Shortages of clothing materials, diversion of textile machinery to the production of materials for armed forces, rising prices, development of substitutes, efforts to forestall further inflation, and shortages of labor at home as well as in industry will necessitate varied adjustments in the purchase, care, management, and use of clothing by the American rural family.

"In view of the effects of wartime effort and wartime economy, the American family will be streamlining its pattern of living. There will be an adequate supply of needed goods, but no clothing frills in the life of the American family for the duration of this war."

Wartime Objectives of Extension Clothing Program:

The war situation expands the objective of the clothing program beyond that of teaching rural families how to provide themselves with enough clothing for well-being and satisfaction. The clothing program now becomes a vital part in the war effort. To release critical materials, equipment, transportation, and labor, we must waste nothing! Buy only what we need! Take care of what we have! In some areas clothing specialists will need to help rural families plan clothing for such acute emergencies as air raids and evacuation.

Committee No. 1

Adjusting the Extension Clothing Program to Wartime Needs.

I Specific War Program:

In all clothing projects, adult and 4-H Club:

1. Stress the war emergency and the relation of clothing to it.

2. Urge families to inventory clothing on hand and classify garments as to possibilities, i.e., wearable, need mending or remodeling, to be given away.
3. Provide devices for making an inventory and keeping clothing spending records. Cooperate closely with the home management program in this respect.
4. Emphasize the importance of suitable work clothes and work shoes for women and girls on farms and factories. Stress foot health and posture.
5. Encourage families to think through their clothing needs in an emergency, considering special clothing for the family in case of air raids or evacuation.

II Conservation:

1. Care and Repair

- a. Introduce the conservation of woollens through the care, repair and retreading of men's clothing.
- b. Give special attention to new problems in laundering and safe methods of dry cleaning at home.
- c. Organize mother and 4-H daughter projects in mending, and the organization and arrangement of sewing equipment to save time, energy, and increase the pleasure of sewing.
- d. Plan 4-H mending demonstrations. Teach proper care of shoes, hosiery, rubber goods, and foundation garments.

2. Remodeling and Renovation.

- a. Stress restyling and use of materials on hand.

3. Storage.

- a. Protect against moths, mildew, etc., Give special care to men's clothing.

4. Equipment.

It is estimated that a large proportion of sewing machines in rural homes do not function properly because they are out of repair or need cleaning and oiling. Sewing machine clinics have an important place in the clothing program and will be stressed.

III Consumer Education.

It is important to interpret and promote:

1. An understanding of price ceiling regulations as a means of preventing inflation.

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2. Labeling as a means to wise buying.
3. An understanding of the clothing situation, reasons for necessary adjustments, etc.
4. Open-minded attitude toward the use and care of new fabrics with emphasis on buying for utility and durability.
5. Selection of shoes adapted to present changing needs with the idea of creating a demand for better work shoes for women.

IV Construction.

Emphasis on basic construction programs:

1. Stress children's clothing, dresses and coats with special emphasis on techniques that will encourage beginners.
2. Help women and girls to make practical decisions in regard to clothing construction, i.e. to consider use of money, time, skill, and energy in wartime, in deciding which garments should be made at home, which should be purchased.

V We will not forget to stress the importance of attractive, colorful and becoming clothing as a means for lifting morale in times of war.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman: Hazel E. Hill, New Hampshire

Helen V. McKinley, Delaware
Clarice L. Scott, BHE, Washington, D. C.
Ruth W. Townsend, Vermont
Sara E. Coyne, Rhode Island
Margery L. Besson, New Jersey
Edith L. Mason, Connecticut

Marion E. Forbes, Massachusetts
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Muriel Brasie, New York
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Rosalind M. Jewett, Pennsylvania

Committee No. 2

Adjusting Clothing Teaching Methods and
Materials to Wartime Situations.

With fabrics and fibers so important to the war effort, with the clothing situation subject to unpredictable, disrupting changes, it is increasingly important that clothing information reach Mr. and Mrs. Homemaker quickly.

With wartime demands on strength and time, limitations on travel and printed materials, new methods must be worked out for getting essential clothing information to rural families.

I Training agents:

1. We will need more adequate and frequent training of home demonstration agents and 4-H agents so that they can share to a larger extent the responsibility of training volunteer leaders in interpreting the clothing situation and teaching conservation practices.

II Informing Extension Staff:

1. We must create and use all opportunities for interpreting the clothing situation to all members of State and county Extension staffs in order to have the viewpoint and cooperation of men as well as women of the staff in working out necessary adjustments.

III Clothing for the Whole Family:

1. We must devise programs on the clothing situation and promotion of conservation suited to needs and interests of: (1) The whole family (2) 4-H girls and boys, (3) older youth. Mixed group presentations may tend to put the wartime clothing problems on a more important level and unify family efforts. A Mr. and Mrs. America job! ! !

IV Cooperate With Other Agencies:

1. We must be open to ways and opportunities for cooperating with related educational and organizational agencies in all phases of clothing conservation. This may include aid to civilian protection groups in evacuation areas.

V Promote "Good Neighbor" Policy in Communities:

1. We must promote the "good neighbor" policy in our rural communities through:
 - a. Encouraging passing on information and sharing surpluses of clothing and equipment with others.
 - b. Discovering and using more local talent (advertise via radio, press, group meetings for "tricks in mending").
 - c. Community work shops as devices for sharing ideas and equipment.
 - d. Swap centers for exchange of children's and adults' clothing.
 - e. Use community bulletin boards to announce bulletins and other timely information on clothing.

VI Good Neighbor Policy Between States:

1. "Good neighbor" on the State level calls for prompt exchange of bulletins with other States for the purpose of facilitating inter-State use of bulletins.

VII Meetings in Wartime.

1. Meetings acknowledged as one of Extension's most effective teaching devices, must meet new limitations of travel and time and be stripped to essentials.
2. County or regional meetings may be curtailed, better and shorter community meetings will be needed.
3. Make more use of 4-H boys and girls to demonstrate conservation of clothing (mending and care). Work for mother and 4-H daughter cooperation.
4. Organize clothing information centers and menderies operated by leaders with special training. Schedule demonstrations.
5. On popular shopping days, set up temporary and well advertised quarters, in some central place, where agents and leaders will be available for consultation on clothing problems.
6. Give publicity to schedule of home demonstration agents -- topics, time, place -- over radio, through press, etc. so that there can be maximum attendance at meetings.

VIII Greater Use of Volunteer Leaders:

1. Neighborhood Leader:

As each State will decide on neighborhood leader assignments regarding clothing, these suggestions are given for neighborhood leader activities in the clothing field.

- a. Explain the present clothing situation and reasons for it to rural families in their neighborhood.
- b. Develop a constructive attitude and understanding toward the necessary, rapid changes in the clothing situation.
- c. Call to the attention of all families those practices which may be adopted to meet the situation, such as careful buying, buying under the price ceiling, conservation of clothing, watching for quality of clothing under price ceilings.
- d. Help to explain and help to arrange for demonstrations of skills in clothing construction, remodeling, care, etc.; selecting and using new materials, etc.

Materials for Neighborhood Leaders:

- a. Material prepared for the neighborhood leaders should be simple, brief, pertinent, and well illustrated. If records are required, they should be simple and confined to immediate war condition needs.

2. Clothing Project Leaders:

The clothing project leader should definitely be a source of clothing information in her community and new leaders should be developed.

a. Clothing Project Leader's Special Wartime Activities:

- 1) Holding clothing clinics in connection with mending garments, exchange, renovation, and sewing machines.
- 2) Cooperating with the neighborhood leader.
- 3) Assisting in making the 4-H Club program more definitely related to wartime needs.
- 4) Finding and using local talent, such as women skilled in mending or making buttonholes and 4-H Club girls who can demonstrate certain skills, i.e. hold a workshop for exchange of ideas and skills.

b. Relationship to neighborhood leader:

- 1) Clothing project leaders should receive all the clothing information that is sent to the neighborhood leaders.
- 2) They should be ready to advise and help the neighborhood leader within their areas on current clothing problems and solutions.

c. Material for clothing project leaders:

- 1) It is suggested that there be prepared for the local clothing project leaders short leaflets dealing with definite phases of Extension's wartime clothing program, such as - The present clothing situation; buying, care, and use of new materials; mending; remodeling; work clothes for farm and factory war emergency clothing; care and use of sewing machine and other equipment; fireproofing; relining coat; care and repair of men's clothing; moth prevention; storage.

IX Getting Facts to the Public:

1. Make more use of newspapers and transcriptions, radio programs, circular letters and bulletins.
2. Send frequent news letters on clothing situation to county Extension workers.

3. Use posters in public buildings and agents' offices on such topics as: Making and Remaking Coats; Making Boys' Suits; Pressing; Mending; Conservation of Shoes and Rubbers.
4. Movies. We recommend a committee be appointed to study available commercial movies, appraise and suggest to cooperatively minded concerns outlines for movies and their effective use.
5. Loan kits. Make more and better use of loan kits of garments, pattern "mends", etc. Counties should make and own such kits.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We need help from the Federal Extension Service in making studies on the following:
 - 1) The effectiveness of clothing bulletins and other printed material. What types are best suited as supplement to meetings? What types for general distribution?
 - 2) Loan kits of clothing. How effective are they? Are they worth the time and money? How can they be made more effective?
 - 3) Radio programs and moving pictures. How effective are these in the clothing program? What is needed to make them more effective?

We want to make all material used in the clothing program as effective as it can be made. There is not time or effort for waste. Waste of materials are unpardonable in wartime.

SUMMARY:

We are greatly indebted to the Bureau of Home Economics for aid through fine bulletins, helpful posters, new techniques.

Yours, for an all-out effort for a strong Extension Clothing Program so that it may help to relieve the strain which world conditions have put on our pattern of living; contribute to the well-being and lift the spirits of our rural homemakers.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman: Esther C. Page, Massachusetts

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